



Cannabis Public Health Advisory Council Meeting

As Required by 2021 Acts of Assembly, Chapter 551

MINUTES

--

September 12, 2022

2:00 PM - 5:00 PM

East Readings Room

Patrick Henry Building

1111 E. Broad St.

Richmond, VA 23219

Richmond, VA

MEMBERS PRESENT: John Littel, Chair
Ngiste Abebe, Vice Chair
Karin Addison
Christina Barrille
Dr. John Whyte
Jimmy Christmas
Michael Krawitz
Colin Greene
Nelson Smith
Joseph Guthrie
Dr. David E. Brown
Linda Jackson
Marcus Trieber

PRESENTERS: David May, Division of Legislative Services
Brianna Bonat, Cannabis Control Authority
Matthew Prentice, Cannabis Control Authority

Caroline Juran, Board of Pharmacy
Nicole Gore, Department of Behavioral Health and
Developmental Services
Marge White, Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth
Dr. Christopher Holstege, Blue Ridge Poison Center

1. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS & ROLL CALL

Secretary Littel called the meeting to order at 2:04 PM.

2. RECAP OF 2022 LEGISLATION

David May from the Division of Legislative Services highlighted legislative updates that occurred during the 2022 General Assembly. He discussed what remains legal regarding cannabis use and plant growth, as well as the upcoming transition of the medical cannabis program from Board of Pharmacy to the Cannabis Control Authority.

3. VIRGINIA CANNABIS CONTROL AUTHORITY – CURRENT AND FUTURE INITIATIVES

Brianna Bonat and Matthew Prentice presented several public health priorities of the Authority. The CCA plans to assume oversight of the medical cannabis program starting in FY24. The team has also begun to create several resources, including fact sheets and informational documents. The topics of these resources include health effects of cannabis use, “responsible” consumption, the difference between THC and CBD, the difference between marijuana and hemp, and more. A few preliminary results were shared from the CCA’s safe driving campaign survey. Although data is unweighted, numbers show a great need for a statewide campaign focused on cannabis use and safe driving.

4. UPDATE ON MEDICAL CANNABIS PROGRAM

The executive director of the VA Board of Pharmacy, Caroline Juran, provided an update on the state’s medical cannabis program. After providing a brief legislative history, Caroline provided current data regarding the program. The medical cannabis program has over 45,000 registered patients and monthly dispensations increased almost eight times between January 2021 and August 2022.

5. UPDATES ON YOUTH CANNABIS USE PREVENTION & EDUCATION EFFORTS

Nicole Gore with VA Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services discussed the education and prevention work of community services boards and need for preventative measures, such as compliance checks, to ensure cannabis products, including unregulated products, are not sold to youth. Marge White with Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth highlighted the Foundation’s marketing campaign, which consisted of providing science and information on the impact of marijuana use on the developing brain to youth. The campaign, UnfazedVA, included a website, Instagram posts, and TikTok videos, all of which produced engagement results that were higher than expected.

6. BLUE RIDGE POISON CENTER – CANNABIS RELATED CALLS AND CHALLENGES

Dr. Christopher Holstege provided the group with a background on the chemical differences between CBD, Delta 9 THC, and Delta 8 THC. He then presented a couple case studies and data from the University of Virginia Health's Blue Ridge Poison Center, showing the rise in THC exposures since 2018. Exposure to unregulated Delta 8 THC products is a main cause for the increase in poison control center calls.

7. NEXT STEPS

The Advisory Council confirmed it will next meet on December 6th at 9am.

8. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments at this meeting.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The Council adjourned at 4:33pm.